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ABSTRACT

Two lines of research are synthesized in this study: (1) structural aspects of children's narrative discourse and (2) the role of maternal styles of talking with young children. Personal narratives of 20 Japanese preschool children, aged 4 and 5 years, and their mothers were analyzed for developmental differences in the 2 age groups. Then conversations between the same children and their mothers were analyzed for differences in narrative elicitation in the two age groups. Maternal statements about or requests for information about actions during narrative elicitation were found to be negatively associated with children's statements about actions in their monologic narrative productions. However, positive correlations were found in two domains: quantity and variety of words used by mother and child in the interaction, and duration of elicited and monologic narratives. It is concluded that how mothers interact verbally with their young children reflects the children's developing narrative skills. Contains 41 references. (MSE)

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Parental Styles in Eliciting Personal Narratives and Developing Narrative Skill

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Running Head: PARENTAL STYLES IN ELICITING NARRATIVES

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Abstract

The study reported in this paper represents a synthesis of two lines of research: (1) the structural aspects of children's narrative discourse and (2) the role of maternal styles of talking with young children. First, personal narratives of 20 middle-class Japanese preschool children aged four and five years old, and their mothers were analyzed using the Labovian approach (Peterson & McCabe, 1983; Labov, 1972), in order to examine what developmental differences were exhibited between Japanese children in the two age-groups. Second, conversations between the same 20 children and their mothers were analyzed to study differences in narrative elicitation between mothers of four- and five-year-olds, respectively.

The existence of distinctive maternal styles of narrative elicitation becomes interesting if we can relate them to children's developing narrative skill. Maternal statements about or requests for information about actions during narrative elicitation were found to be negatively associated with children's statements about actions in their monologic narrative productions. On the other hand, positive corrrelations were revealed in two domains: (1) quantity and variety--the greater the number and variety of words the child used when interacting with his or her mother, the more words and greater variety of words he or she would use when constructing narratives alone; (2) duration--the longer the mother allowed her child to continue talking per turn during narrative elicitation, the longer the child would continue to talk during a monologic narrative, using a greater number and variety of words. Thus, how mothers verbally interact with their young children during narrative elicitation is reflective of those children's developing narrative skill. These findings, which suggest possible transfer from one context (mother-child interactions) to another (monologic narrative production), are discussed from a Vygotskian perspective (Vygotsky, 1978).

Parental Styles in Eliciting Personal Narratives and Developing Narrative Skill

Studies of language acquisition and language development have recently focused on (1) the structural aspects of narrative discourse (e.g., Peterson, 1990; Reilly, 1992) and (2) the role of maternal styles of talking with young children (e.g., McCabe & Peterson, 1991; Peterson & McCabe, 1992). In narrative contexts in particular, children's speech is guided and/or scaffolded by mothers who initiate and elicit children's contributions about past experiences. Eisenberg (1985) examined the dialogic nature of conversations of young children with their mothers. Hudson (1990, 1993) has studied the role of parent-child conversations in the development of young children's ability to talk about past events. Investigating the effects of maternal elicitation style, she particularly emphasizes the influence of repeatedly recounting events on the emergence and development of early autobiographical memory.

Other researchers also emphasize maternal style differences in narrative elicitation. McCabe and Peterson (1990, 1991) and Peterson and McCabe (1992) claim that stylistic differences between parents also affect children's later narrative style. According to these researchers, if mothers habitually asked their children to describe people, places, and things involved in some event, the children later on told stories that focused on orientation at the expense of plot; in contrast, if mothers habitually asked their children about what happened next, the children later on told stories with well-developed plots (McCabe & Peterson, 1990, Peterson & McCabe, 1992). Likewise, Fivush (1991) suggests that those mothers who use a more elaborated elicitation style early in development have children who provide more elaborated accounts later in development. Additionally, Fivush and Fromhoff's (1988) elaborative mothers, who provide a substantial amount of information, correspond to what Hudson (1993) calls "high elaboration mothers"; Fivush and Fromhoff's repetitive mothers, on the other hand, correspond to Hudson's low elaboration mothers.

The presence of distinctive maternal styles of narrative elicitation becomes interesting if we can relate them to children's narrative skill. It has been claimed that children's cognitive skills first develop through interactions with more mature members of society and are then internalized (Bruner, 1977; Vygotsky, 1978). When applied to narrative contexts, the social interaction paradigm suggests that the ability to structure personal narratives develop through social interactions between individuals, particularly between young children and their mothers, who are experienced adults.

A natural extension of this assumption is that the mother, either implicitly or explicitly, interacts with her child in culturally specific ways. African-American children tell a narrative consisting of a series of implicitly associated personal anecdotes (Michaels, 1981, 1991). Hawaiian children present "talk story," rambling personal narratives enhanced with humor, jokes, and teasing in the form of joint performance, or cooperative production of responses by two or more speakers (Au, 1993). Likewise, Japanese children tend to tell concise stories that are cohesive collections of several personal experiences (Minami, 1990; Minami & McCabe, 1990, 1991a, 1991b, 1993, 1996). It is thus critical to consider cultural differences in the ways in which children structure their oral personal narratives. Moreover, it is assumed that as a result of early social interactions, young children's narratives are shaped into culturally preferred narrative patterns (e.g., McCabe & Peterson, 1991; Peterson & McCabe, 1992).

Unfortunately, however, data from languages other than English are very limited. We do not know much about either maternal patterns of narrative elicitation or children's developing narrative skill. To fill this gap, in this study I use Japanese data to examine the relationship between parental styles of narrative elicitation and children's developing narrative skill. This study has a twofold purpose: (1) to identify young Japanese children's developing narrative skill (i.e., developmental aspects); (2) to describe how maternal patterns of narrative elicitation relate to the narrative skill young Japanese

children demonstrate (i.e., social interaction aspects). Accordingly, research questions are as follows:

1. How do Japanese preschoolers (four- and five-year-olds) turn their experiences into narrative? What developmental stages do they exhibit?
2. Are there any style differences in narrative elicitation between mothers of four-year-olds and mothers of five-year-olds?
3. Is there any relationship between maternal patterns of narrative elicitation and children's developing narrative skill?

As will be described in detail shortly, for the purpose of this study, young Japanese preschool children aged four and five were selected. The reason that I focused on four- and five-year-olds is due to age constraints that emerge from analysis of the development of children's narratives. Children begin telling personal narratives from the age of two (Sachs, 1979), but in any culture these early productions are quite short through the age of three and a half years (McCabe & Peterson, 1991). While three-year-olds' narratives are often simple two-event narratives, four-year-olds' narratives are much more diverse, and five-year-olds tell lengthy, well-sequenced stories that end a little prematurely at the climax (McCabe & Peterson, 1991; Peterson & McCabe, 1983). Preschool years thus represent the period of extremely rapid development in the child's acquisition of narrative capacity.

Method

Subjects

Twenty middle-class Japanese preschool children participated in this study, along with their parents. These children consist of the following two age groups:
(1) 10 five-year-old middle-class Japanese children who were in five-year-old children's classrooms in preschool at the time of data collection (5 boys and 5 girls, M= 5;3 years).
(2) 10 four-year-old middle-class Japanese children who were in four-year-old children's classrooms in preschool at the time of data collection (5 boys and 5 girls, M= 4;3 years).

In addition, none of these mother-child pairs had experienced living overseas at the time of data collection.

Procedures

Children's developing narrative skill (monologic narrative production). This activity, analyzing children's developing narrative skill, follows the Labovian methodology (Labov, 1972; Peterson & McCabe, 1983). Before eliciting narratives, rapport with the child was established through activities such as drawing pictures. When children were judged to be comfortable with the researcher, they were asked in their native language, Japanese, prompting questions related to injuries, in the manner developed by Peterson and McCabe (1983). This elicitation technique had previously proved to be effective with Japanese children (Minami, 1990; Minami & McCabe, 1990, 1991a, 1991b, 1993, 1995). Questions about personally experienced events were asked, such as "Have you ever gotten hurt?" in children's native language, Japanese. However, no specific questions were asked. The narratives elicited from the children were thus without scaffolding and relatively monologic in nature.

To examine the relative narrative competence of young children, adult narratives were also elicited. Adults narratives are assumed to serve as a standard of comparison that provides the culturally appropriate, full-fledged, rhetorically well-formed narrative that children are expected to accomplish eventually in telling personal narratives. For this study, since plural short prompts were given to children in order to facilitate their narrative production, the longest narrative produced by each child was selected, whereas only one prompt was given to mothers.

Parental styles of narrative elicitation (Dialogic narrative production). The purpose of examining parental styles of narrative elicitation is to understand mothers' scaffolding strategies, i.e., how mothers verbally interact with their young children during narrative elicitation. Mothers were asked to elicit talk about interesting past events or experiences from their children in a relaxed and informal situation; no more specific

instructions or requests were provided. In contrast to the researcher's elicitation strategies in which non-directive general cues were given and thus narratives were elicited from the children without providing any scaffold, in this activity mothers were expected to scaffold the narratives of their young children. In this project, therefore, following the methods of McCabe and Peterson (1991), mothers are expected to ask their children to relate "stories about personal experiences, about real events that have happened in the past" (p. 226). However, mothers were also instructed to do this narrative elicitation in as natural a way as possible, "like you ordinarily behave when you ask your child to talk about past events" (McCabe & Peterson, 1991, p. 226). In contrast to the researcher's narrative elicitation, therefore, this task is dialogic in nature. Mothers and their children were audio-tape-recorded in their homes. However, some mother-child pairs, talked about more events than others. To establish a comparable data base, therefore, a decision was made to analyze only the initial three narrative productions by each mother-child pair.

Coding

All conversations were transcribed verbatim for coding in the format required for analysis using the Child Language Data Exchange System (MacWhinney & Snow, 1985, 1990). Two different coding schemes, high point analysis and Dickinson's system, were used to examine children's developing narrative skill and to derive measures for determining parental styles of narrative elicitation, respectively.

High point analysis for children's developing narrative skill. The first coding scheme focuses on structural classification of each clause in monologic narrative from the standpoint of high point analysis. Labov and his colleagues (Labov, Cohen, Robins, & Lewis, 1968; Labov & Waletzky, 1967) presented linguistic techniques to evaluate the narration of experiences within Black English vernacular. Minami and McCabe (1991a, 1991b, 1993, 1995) have drawn from an adaptation of Labov's analysis called high point analysis (Peterson & McCabe, 1983) because of the central importance of ascertaining

ascertaining the emotional climax--high point--of the narrative. The high point analysis coding scheme clarifies the role that each clause plays in organizing a narrative. Some clauses play the role of descriptive "orientation," which is considered to set the stage for the narrated events, whereas others are considered to function as "evaluation" or represent "actions." Clauses produced by each participant were fit into one of the following five categories:

1. Action: Specific actions, events, or processes that take place are considered actions. They are temporally restricted narrative clauses, as opposed to free narrative clauses represented by orientation and evaluation clauses. Action clauses recapitulate a single event that took place at some discrete or restricted point in time (Labov, Cohen, Robins, & Lewis, 1968; Labov & Waletzky, 1967) (e.g., "chuusha shita.": "[I] got a shot." [Tomo, boy, age 5;6]).

2. Orientation: Statements in which the narrator digresses from the events of a narrative so that he or she provides the listener with contextual embedding of the narrative, such as the setting, people, time, features of environment, conditions, and ongoing behavior in the narrative. Orientation clauses do not occur at restricted point in time and are thus free narrative clauses. (e.g., "tulip gumi no **toki**.": "When [I] was in tulip class." [Ayaka, girl, age 5;3]).

3. Evaluation: Another type of free narrative clauses that tell the listener what to think about a person, place, thing, event, or more globally, the entire experience described in a narrative telling (e.g., "nakanakatta.": "[I] didn't cry." [Minori, girl, age 5;8]).

4. Appendages: This is a composite category including narrative comments that appear either at the beginning (abstracts, e.g., "kaze no toki mo itta koto aru.": "Even when (I had) cold, (I) went." [Minori, girl, age 5;8], attention-getting devices, e.g., "boku shitteru wa.": "I know [something]." [Ryota, boy, age 3;8]) or at the end of the main body of the narrative (codas, e.g., "oshimai.": "That's it." [Akio, boy, age 5;4]).

5. Reported speech: Statements that report character speech by generally reproducing the speech performed. Reported speech is included because it is considered linguistically marked recounting of a past speech event (Ely & McCabe, 1993) (e.g., "ano ne, 'chuusya shinai hito ehon yonde mattoite kudasai,' tte sensei itteta.": "Well, you know, 'Those who haven't gotten a shot, please read books while waiting,' said the teacher." [Kimi, girl, age 4;6]).

Note that the distinction between restricted narrative clauses and free narrative clauses corresponds to Hopper and Thompson's (1980) distinction between foreground information (i.e., plot-advancing events/main line event clauses) and background information (i.e., plot-motivating comments/contextualizing clauses). Also, as can be seen above, appendages do not appear by themselves; thus, ignoring subcategories (i.e., abstracts, attention-getting devices, and codas) may result in gross simplification. For example, a narrative clause, "**sukoshidake** naita" ("[I] cried **a little bit**" [Minori, girl, 5;8]), describes specific action that took place. At the same time, however, since the clause is accompanied by an evaluative tone, it is categorized as "action with evaluation" Thus, orientation, evaluation, and action clauses are also sometimes categorized as being subordinate to other categories.

Dickinson's system for parental styles of narrative elicitation. Transcripts of all parents' speech were scored according to Dickinson's (1991) system, which was previously used to analyze how speech acts are mapped onto dialogic narrative discourse in English (Dickinson, 1991; McCabe & Peterson, 1991). By using Dickinson's coding scheme as a basis, Minami (1994a, 1994b) and Minami and McCabe (1991b, 1993, 1995 have devised appropriate coding rules that are applicable to Japanese data.

Insert Figure 1 about here.

Figure 1 gives a visual representation of coding rules for parental speech; according to these coding rules, transcripts of all parents' speech were scored. Parental utterances were coded as one of three types: (I) topic-initiation (or topic-switch), (II) topic-extension, and (III) conversational strategies that simply show attention, such as "un" (uh huh) and "huun" (well). Utterances categorized as topic-extension are further categorized into:

1. Descriptive statements: Statements that describe or request description of a scene, a condition, or a state (e.g., "ato Momotaro no hon mo atta de sho.": "Besides there was a book about the Peach Boy.")

2. Action statements: Statements about or requests for information about actions that, accompanied by an action verb, describe a specific action (e.g., "banana mo tabetan.": "[You] also ate a banana.")

3. Mother's evaluative comments: Evaluations by the mother herself. (e.g., "sore ii ne.": "That's good, you know.")

4. Mother's request for child's evaluative comments: (e.g., "u: chan no doko ga kawaii no?": "What do [you] think makes the bunny cute?")

Relationship between maternal narrative elicitation patterns and children's developing narrative skill. Connecting maternal narrative elicitation strategies and children's developing narrative skill, the present study specifically focuses on the following:

1. The relationship between the child's action statements in monologic narrative and maternal statements about or requests for information about actions during maternal narrative elicitation.

2. The relationship between the child's orientation statements in monologic narrative and the mother's descriptive statements that describe or request description of a scene, a condition, or a state.

3. The relationship between the child's evaluation statements in monologic narrative and evaluation components during maternal narrative elicitation, i.e., (a) the mother's evaluative comments and (b) the mother's request for child's evaluative comments.

Lexical levels. To study both developmental and social interactional aspects, children's lexical levels were also examined, such as utterances over turns (i.e., the number of utterances produced by a speaker per turn) as well as the total number of words and the total number of different words used in each individual's monologic and dialogic narrative.

Reliability. Two coders independently coded 20% (i.e., 4 children's transcripts--2 of each age--and 4 mothers' transcripts) of the monologic narrative data, and one person coded the remaining monologic narrative data. Cohen's kappa, an estimate of reliability that corrects for chance rates of agreement, for the main categories (i.e., appendages, orientation, action, evaluation, reported speech) of the children's narrative coding was .94; Cohen's kappa for the subcategories (e.g., abstracts, attention-getting devices, coda) of the children's narrative coding was .89. Likewise, Cohen's kappa for the main categories of the mothers' narrative coding was .95; and Cohen's kappa for the subcategories was .79. To describe the relative strength of agreement associated with kappa statistics, if the range is between 0.61 and 0.80, it is labeled as being "substantial"; further, if the range of kappa is over 0.81, it is considered to represent "almost perfect" agreement (Bakeman & Gottman, 1986; Landis & Koch, 1977). Thus, except for one, which is still in the "substantial" agreement range, all estimates of reliability fall into the range of "almost perfect" agreement.

In like manner, there was one principal coder of the dialogic narrative (i.e., parent conversational) data, but four full transcripts (i.e., 20 percent) were randomly selected and coded by a second person. Intercoder reliability was .97 for the first level (topic-initiation, topic-extension, and statements showing attention) and .87 for the second level (statements about or requests for descriptions, statements about or requests for actions,

mother's evaluative comments, and mother's request for child's evaluative comments). One person coded the remaining conversations.

Results

Children's Developing Narrative Skill

Lexical levels. Neither age nor gender differences approached statistical significance in the following four categories: (1) the total number of words, (2) the total number of different words, and (3) utterances over turns. As far as these variables are concerned, therefore, there are no major developmental differences between four-year-olds and five-year-olds. Furthermore, in these categories no significant associations were found between mothers and children, indicating that talkative mothers do not necessarily have talkative children, and that reticent mothers do not necessarily have reticent children.

High point analysis. No differences between four-year-olds and five-year-olds reached statistical significance in terms of action, evaluation or orientation. Each of these two age groups was then compared with the adult group (i.e., 20 mothers). As can be seen in Table 1 and Example 1, the proportion of children's restricted narrative clauses (Labov, Cohen, Robins, & Lewis, 1968; Labov & Waletzky, 1967) or foreground information (Hopper & Thompson, 1980) was substantially higher than adults'. That is, four-year-olds provided proportionately more action statements than adults, $t(28) = 6.04$, $p < .0001$; likewise, five-year-olds provided proportionately more action statements than adults, $t(12) = 3.68$, $p < .01$.

In complementary fashion, the proportion of the sum of evaluation and orientation clauses provided by adults was substantially higher than that by either one of the children's groups. That is, four-year-olds provided proportionately fewer free narrative clauses (Labov, Cohen, Robins, & Lewis, 1968; Labov & Waletzky, 1967) or background information (Hopper & Thompson, 1980) than adults, $t(11.4) = -2.37$, $p < .05$. Also,

five-year-olds gave proportionately fewer free narrative clauses than adults, $t(28) = -2.73$, $p < .05$.

The two components of free narrative clauses were then examined separately, because, according to Labov and Waletzky (1967), while orientation serves the referential function, evaluation serves the affective or evaluative function. Although marginal, difference was observed between four-year-olds and adults in the proportion of orientation statements, $t(28) = -1.90$, $p = .07$; likewise, five-year-olds provided proportionately fewer orientation statements than adults, $t(28) = -2.97$, $p < .01$. As far as evaluation is concerned, however, compared to four-year-olds, five-year-olds' monologic narrative organization seems to move in the direction of adult models. While four-year-olds gave proportionately fewer evaluation statements than adults, $t(28) = -2.08$, $p < 0.05$, the difference between five-year-olds and adults did not reach statistical significance.

Additionally, as far as the present data are concerned, the child's style for talking about past events did not correspond to the mother's style for talking about the past. That is, with regard to action, orientation, and evaluation, no significant associations were found between mothers and children. Individual differences in narrative components among Japanese mothers were not reflected in differences in narrative components among their children. These results therefore indicate that as far as these elements are concerned, the mother's narrative style does not predict her child's narrative style. Those mothers who give many action statements (i.e., foreground such information) do not necessarily have children who give many action statements. Likewise, those mothers who provide many evaluation or orientation statements (i.e., background such information) do not necessarily have children who provide many evaluation or orientation statements.

Insert Table 1 about here.

Example 1

A Japanese preschooler's monologic narrative (Akio, boy, age 5; 4) (Note that the numbers to the right refer to the minimum unit or what Chafe (1993) calls an accent unit, and small letters (a-j) in parentheses indicate the beginning of each clause, which, following Chafe's (1993) classification, is considered an intonation unit. High-point analysis coding is also provided; clauses that come into the categories of action, orientation, evaluation, appendage, and coda are indicated as ACT, ORT, EVL, APP, and COD, respectively.)

(a)	ACT:ORT	ano **ne**,	1
		'Um, you know,'	
		(INV: un)	
		'uh huh'	
		speed **dashitei**tara **ne**,	2
		'(I) was speeding, you know,'	
		(INV: un)	
		'uh huh'	
(b)	ACT	kokete,	3
		'(I) fell,'	
(c)	ACT	handle magatte **ne**.	4
		'handlebars became bent, you know.'	
(d)	ACT	odeko no byooin itte **ne**,	5
		'(I) went to the forehead hospital, you know,'	
(e)	ACT	ano **ne**,	6
		'um, you know,'	

(INV: un sorede)

'yeah, then'

byooin itte **ne**, 7

'(I) went to the hospital, you know,'

(f) ACT sorede **ne**, 8

'then, you know,'

(INV: un)

'uh huh'

koko maite moratte **ne**, 9

'(I) had this (part) bandaged, you know,'

(INV: un)

'uh huh'

odeko. 10

'the forehead.'

(INV: un)

'uh huh'

(g) ACT sorede **ne**, 11

'then, you know ,'

ojiichan to obaachan ga **ne**, 12

'my grandpa and grandma, you know,'

(INV: un)

'uh huh'

arare o motte kite, 13

'brought rice cake cubes,'

(h) ACT tabe te, 14

'(I) ate (those cakes),'

(i) EVL sorede **ne**, 15

'then, you know,'

daibu naotte kita. 16

'(I) became very much okay.'

(INV: ah honto, sorede)

'uh really, then'

(j) APP:COD owari. 17

'that's it.'

Summary. No significant differences were found between four-year-olds and five-year-olds with regard to the total number of words and number of different words used in each individual's narrative. Consequently, degree of lexical redundancy of these two groups are almost identical.

With regard to developmental stages (see research question 1), however, high point analysis has revealed that, compared to adults, among children's narratives the proportion of action clauses (i.e., restricted narrative clauses or foreground information) is high, while the proportion of free narrative clauses (i.e., background information) is relatively low. When telling a personal narrative, in addition to providing less information about the characters, the setting, or the event, preschool children seem to pay less verbal attention to their attitude toward the event. In other words, compared to adults, young children emphasized a temporal sequence of action with less emphasis on nonsequential information, especially orientation. Although four-year-olds gave proportionately less evaluation than adults, no differences were observed between five-year-olds and adults. Therefore, while both four-year-olds and five-year-olds emphasize simple description of successive events, compared to four-year-olds, five-year-olds begin to evaluate at adult-like levels. Thus, we have identified age-related differences between four-year-olds and five-year-olds, and more specifically, the transitional nature of five-year-olds; that is, compared to four-year-olds, five-year-olds try to express more the meaning of the experiences that they had in their monologic narratives.

Parental Styles of Narrative Elicitation

Frequency and proportion of patterns of narrative elicitation. For each category of parental speech, the total frequency of such speech was counted; the proportional frequency was also calculated by dividing the total frequency of each category by the total number of utterances that the mother produced. First, frequencies were analyzed because they represent the impact that loquaciousness might have on children's narration (e.g., Hoff-Ginsberg, 1992; McCabe & Peterson, 1991; Reese, Haden & Fivush, 1992). Second, proportions were used because they correct for differences in length and allow us to see differing relative emphasis on components of narration. To test for the effect of group and gender, multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) were conducted for the major coding categories: maternal requests for descriptions, actions, and evaluations, maternal evaluations, statements showing attention, and initiation.

With regard to frequencies, while the overall multivariate test did not approach statistical significance, a subsequent series of univariate analyses of variance (ANOVA) accompanied by Bonferroni Post Hoc tests revealed the following: There was a significant univariate effect of group on maternal requests for child's evaluative comments, $F(1, 16) = 10.37$, $p < .01$ (see Table 2). A Bonferroni Post Hoc test showed that mothers of four-year-olds requested evaluation from their children more frequently than did mothers of five-year-olds.

In terms of proportions, there was a marginal effect of group, Wilks' lambda = .48, approximate $F(5, 12) = 2.57$, $p = .08$. As can be seen Table 2, the effect of group was largely attributable to a marginal effect on maternal requests for child's evaluative comments, $F(1, 16) = 3.56$, $p < .08$. While a Bonferroni Post Hoc test did not reach statistical significance, the mothers of four-year-olds requested proportionately more evaluation ($M = 26.44$, $SD = 10.49$) than did the mothers of five-year-olds ($M = 17.18$, $SD = 8.30$).

Insert Table 2 about here.

Summary. With regard to style differences in narrative elicitation between mothers of four-year-olds and mothers of five-year-olds (see research question 2), both in terms of frequency and proportion, mothers of four-year-olds requested more evaluation from their children than did mothers of five-year-olds. These tendencies may reflect that because four-year-olds often said un (yes) or uun (no) without saying any more, their mothers needed to appeal to topic-extension strategies or to draw some kinds of evaluative comments from them, such as the example below, in which Akira (boy, age 4;6) and his mother are talking about catching goldfishes in a local festival.

Example 2 Akira and her mother's interaction

CHI: tsukamae tara, kawaisoo?

'If (I) catch (them), do (goldfishes) feel sad?'

MOT: kawaisoo?

'do (they) feel sad?'

CHI: un.

'Yeah.'

MOT: kawaisoo na no?

'Do (they) feel sad?'

CHI: un.

'Yeah.'

MOT: huun.

'Well.'

demo iru yan kingyo ie ni.

'But (you have) goldfishes in (our) house.'

Although children are considered to come to internalize and gain performance competencies through mother-child interactions like the above (Vygotsky, 1978), children's attitudes obviously influence their mothers' strategies. For example, if children were not capable of providing sufficient evaluative comments by themselves, mothers would insist that their children provide more evaluative comments. If children can provide relatively satisfactory evaluative comments, on the other hand, mothers would not need to ask their children to provide more evaluative comments. Thus, the mother's emphasis on requests for evaluations seems a product of two-way (i.e., bidirectional) interaction rather than that of one-way (i.e., unidirectional) interaction.

Discussion

Results in this section are presented primarily from the summarization of the relationship between maternal narrative elicitation styles (i.e., dialogic narratives) and the children's narrative skill as observed when a researcher elicited narratives from the children without scaffolding (i.e., monologic narratives).

Lexical Levels

Table 3 displays correlations between equivalent (and related) measures in the two different narrative activities, monologic narratives and dialogic narratives. A pattern of positive corrrelations emerges between equivalent measures in the two different activities: (1) quantity and variety: the more words, and the greater variety of words, the child used when performing with his or her mother, the more words and greater variety of words the child used when constructing narratives alone; (2) duration: the longer the mother allowed her child to continue talking per turn during narrative elicitation, the longer the child continued to talk during a monologic narrative task, using more words and greater variety of words. These findings suggest possible transfer from one context (mother-child interactions) to another (monologic narrative production).

However, an alternative interpretation is certainly possible. These results may simply suggest that talkative children in mother-child interactions are also talkative when

asked to talk about past events in the monologic narrative task, and that reticent children in mother-child interactions are also reticent when asked to talk about the past on their own. Following this interpretation, therefore, regardless of differences in the context (i.e., either monologic or dialogic), talkative children are generally talkative, and, in contrast, reticent children are usually reticent. In either case--a possible transfer or a representation of the nature of an individual child--as further discussed below, the results seem to point to the impact of maternal styles of narrative elicitation on children's narrative skill.

Insert Table 3 about here.

Narrative Elicitation Style and Development of Narrative Skill

How mothers verbally interact with their young children during narrative elicitation is reflective of those children's developing narrative skill (see research question 3). Although marginal, maternal requests for actions during narrative elicitation were found to be negatively associated with children's action statements in their monologic narrative productions, $r(18) = -.41$, $p = .07$ (see Table 4). In other words, the more requests for actions the mother makes during narrative elicitation (i.e., dialogic narrative), the fewer action statements the child provides when talking about past events on his or her own (i.e., monologic narrative). Furthermore, the fewer requests for actions the mother makes during narrative elicitation, the more action statements the child provides when talking about past events on his or her own. Although seemingly not supporting of a social interactionist point of view, this relationship is reasonable when considering the following: In mother-child interactions, the mother requested her child to talk about actions when she considered that her child gave insufficient action statements (the mother's repeated prodding might also have squelched her child's initiative). When a researcher elicited narratives without providing scaffolding, the child did not talk much

about actions, either. The converse is also true. If the mother considered that her child had provided sufficient action statements during narrative elicitation (i.e., in the dialogic narrative context), she may not have felt the need to elicit more action statements. Since the child was relatively capable of providing action statements, when asked to talk about the past on his or her own (i.e., in the monologic narrative context), he or she also provided relatively sufficient action statements. Therefore, maternal narrative elicitation strategies predict children's developing narrative skill.

The above-mentioned assumption nicely explains the relationship between maternal styles of narrative elicitation and children's developing narrative skill. Recall that, with regard to children's developmental stages (see research question 1), high point analysis of monologic narratives indicated that four-year-olds gave proportionately less evaluation than adults, although no differences were observed between five-year-olds and adults. It seems reasonable to assume that since four-year-olds did not provide sufficient evaluative accounts in mother-child interactions either, mothers tended to emphasize requests for evaluations. Therefore, differences in elicitation style between mothers of four-year-olds and mothers of five-year-olds are related to age differences in children's narrative skill.

In connecting maternal narrative elicitation strategies with children's developing narrative skill, we can further explain why the differences in maternal requests for descriptions and actions did not approach statistical significance between the mothers of four-year-olds and the mothers of five-year-olds. When a researcher elicited narratives from the children without providing scaffolding, both four- and five-year-olds could provide a relatively sufficient amount of foreground information (i.e., actions), and, moreover, no difference was observed between these two age groups. In contrast to action statements that are categorized as referential (Labov & Waletzky, 1967), in the monologic narrative production task, although orientation is also considered referential, both age groups provided a relatively small number of orientation statements; like action

statements, however, there was no difference in orientation statements between the two groups. Thus, it seems reasonable to assume that, since four- and five-year-olds provide similar amounts of action and orientation statements, which are both categorized as referential, mothers of four-year-olds and mothers of five-year-olds choose similar narrative elicitation styles.

Conclusions

The results reported in this paper indicate that compared to adults, preschool children emphasize a temporal sequence with little emphasis on non-sequential information such as evaluation and orientation. This result seems reasonable when considering what kinds of components are added and expanded in the process of narrative development. As Hopper (1979) defines, foreground information refers to the parts of the narrative that relate a sequence of events with respect to a timeline thus belonging to the skeletal structure of the narrative, and, in contrast, background information refers to supportive narrative (e.g., orientation, which presents static descriptions of the scene, and evaluation, which describes the agent's motives) that does not itself narrate the main events. Thus, there seems to exist a relationship between an individual's age and the amount of background information he or she adds to the narrative. Moreover, as seen in the increase of evaluation clauses with age, the older an individual becomes, the more non-sequential information he or she adds to the narrative, in order to emphasize why he or she wants to tell the narrative. The results obtained in the present study, in fact, confirm previous studies of different narrative genres (e.g., Berman & Slobin, 1994) that found "young children would focus mainly on description of events and activities, whereas older narrators would provide more background information relating to the attendant circumstances in which the unfolding plotline events are embedded" (p. 45).

As summarized in the previous section, maternal styles of narrative elicitation relate to children's narrative skill. For example, an inverse relationship was found between the mother's requests for actions during narrative elicitation and the child's

action statements in monologic narrative. Although this result appears contradictory, mothers have been found to scaffold children's narratives in ways that are consistent with the social interactionist paradigm (Bruner, 1977; Vygotsky, 1978). That is, in mother-child interactions, unless the mother considers that her child gives sufficient action statements, she scaffolds her child by providing requests for actions. Previous longitudinal studies (e.g., Fivush, 1991; McCabe & Peterson, 1991; Peterson & McCabe, 1992) have identified that the child later internalizes the particular narrative structure supplied by the mother; for example, following Fivush (1991), those mothers who provide temporally complex and informationally dense narratives early in development have children who produce temporally complex and informationally dense narratives later in development. The present study, however, collected monologic and dialogic narratives simultaneously. As we have seen, those children who do not provide a lot of action statements during mother-child interactions are not capable of providing sufficient action statements, when asked to talk about past experiences on their own without parental scaffolding, either.

To conclude, personal narratives order experience by making sense of the general flow of events in a person's life; however, the origins of narrative style can be traced back to conversations between parents and children. It seems clear that Japanese mothers simultaneously pay considerable attention to their children's narratives and support their children's progressive contributions to the narrative task.

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Table 1
Means and Standard Deviations of Variables Related to High Point Analysis (Proportion)

	Four-year-olds (n = 10)		Five-year-olds (n = 10)		Mothers (n = 20)	
Variable	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Action	55.00	19.65	47.64	23.22	18.47	13.27
Orientation	26.87	20.03	23.67	10.90	38.87	14.18
Evaluation	33.39	22.08	41.24	25.25	46.73	13.15
Appendages	7.01	9.46	4.03	5.56	6.05	4.93
Reported speech	2.64	6.15	2.76	5.83	2.93	4.87

Note: As far as three major elements--action, orientation, and evaluation--are concerned, irrespective of the level of categorization (first level or second); whenever one of these variables appear, it is counted as one appearance. Therefore, because many comments are counted twice here, the proportions do not add up to 100%.

Table 2 Mean Frequencies and Percentages (Standard Deviations) of Mothers' Prompts to Children about Past Events

	Mothers of four-year-olds M	(SD)	Mothers of five-year-olds M	(SD)	F[a] values for main effect of GROUP
Requests for descriptions					
Frequencies	19.10	(8.94)	15.00	(7.35)	1.23
Percentages	13.36%	(3.46)	14.72%	(4.83)	0.53
Requests for actions					
Frequencies	28.80	(15.59)	23.50	(10.01)	0.76
Percentages	20.23%	(8.89)	24.30%	(11.27)	0.78
Requests for evaluations					
Frequencies	32.00	(13.24)	16.50	(7.88)	10.37**
Percentages	24.64%	(10.49)	17.18%	(8.30)	3.56~
Evaluations by mother herself					
Frequencies	22.70	(14.61)	15.40	(10.34)	1.50
Percentages	14.96%	(6.12)	14.69%	(6.62)	0.01
Statements showing attention					
Frequencies	36.20	(31.46)	27.10	(20.85)	0.56
Percentages	24.22%	(17.36)	26.18%	(19.15)	0.06
Initiation					
Frequencies	3.00	(0.00)	2.80	(0.63)	1.00
Percentages	2.59%	(1.46)	2.93%	(1.00)	0.37

~p < .10
*p < .05
**p < .01

[a] Degrees of freedom = 1, 16

Table 3 Correlations between Children's Performance Measures in Two Different Narrative Activities (Four-year-olds and Five-year-olds Combined)

	DUOT	MNDW	MTNW	DNDW	DTNW
MUOT	.46*	.17	.22	.17	.11
DUOT		.41~	.43*	.57**	.62**
MNDW			.95****	.41~	.44*
MTNW				.33	.38~
DNDW					.94****

~p < .10
*p < .05
**p < .01
***p < .001
****p < .0001

MUOT: Utterances over turns in monologic narrative
DUOT: Utterances over turns in dialogic narrative
MNDW: Number of different words used in monologic narrative
MTNW: Total number of words used in monologic narrative
DNDW: Number of different words used in dialogic narrative
DTNW: Total number of words used in dialogic narrative

Note: Dialogic (with the mother, with scaffolding)
Monologic (with the researcher, without scaffolding)

Table 4 Correlations between Measures of Two Different Narrative Activities (Maternal Narrative Elicitation Patterns in Mother-Child Interactions and Children's Monologic Narrative Production)

	MACT	MEVL	MCEVL	CACT	CEVL	CORT
MDES	-.08	.36	.00	-.06	.18	.29
MACT		-.03	.16	-.41~	.27	.07
MEVL			-.08	.18	.01	-.10
MCEVL				-.05	-.03	.20
CACT					-.69**	-.32
CEVL						-.02

~p < .10
*p < .05
**p < .01

MDES: Maternal requests for descriptions (dialogic)
MACT: Maternal requests for actions (dialogic)
MEVL: Evaluations by mother herself (dialogic)
MCEVL: Maternal requests for evaluations (dialogic)
CACT: Child's action statements (monologic)
CEVL: Child's evaluation statements (monologic)
CORT: Child's orientation statements (monologic)

Note: Dialogic (with the mother, with scaffolding)
Monologic (with the researcher, without scaffolding)

Figure 1. Coding System.